

IMPORTANT STARTUP NOTES

Welcome to my watercolor course!

I believe that you will find it to be thorough and well organized. And, I certainly hope you will find it to be fun and rewarding.

I try to break this painting process down into easy-to-follow steps. I have no “beginning” paintings or “more advanced” paintings. I just have “paintings”—landscape compositions that beg to be rendered with watercolors. I treat all of my paintings equally. If you like a painting’s composition, you can paint it too!

There is no crying in watercolor. It is, after all, only paint and paper (well, okay, maybe it’s a little more than that). But my point is: make it fun, not a job. Like most things in life, practice makes perfect. We all know the famous quote prompted by an inquiry of a sportsman’s good luck: *“Yes, good luck, and (coincidentally) the more I practice, the luckier I get!”* I think this is applicable to watercolor painting too.

Following are a few helpful notes that you will want to review before proceeding with this course. Thank you for coming aboard. Enjoy this watercolor ride!



DOWNLOAD PDFs

Rather than print the course documents directly from the “course window,” I highly recommend that you “Download” them as PDFs.

Your computer almost certainly has a PDF viewer already installed (probably Adobe Acrobat Reader). If not, you can install Adobe Acrobat Reader on your computer for free: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>

Printing the Drawing Guides, etc. from a PDF viewer will assure that they will print out in the correct size and orientation (landscape versus portrait).

MASKING

For a more thorough explanation of my masking techniques, please view the video *Masking 101*. It discusses a different painting, but explains in more detail my basic reasoning and approach to masking.

PALETTE

For a more thorough explanation of my painting palette, please view the video *Gary Palette 101*.

SUPPLY LIST

I have a single downloadable recommended list of supplies for all of my paintings. It is a fairly succinct list of tools and paints. The few items that I *sometimes* do not use on this list (triangle, toothbrush, Brown Madder, Paynes Gray) are so minor, I thought it a mistake to not include them. You will surely use each of those items at some time in your painting pursuits.

YOUR PAINTING

I am often asked by students if they can sell or display their lesson painting. Yes. It may be *my* source composition, but it is by all means *your* painting. Each artist brings something a bit different in their painting rendition—even when following the same steps and techniques. From my perspective, the painting that *you* create from my instruction is *your* painting.

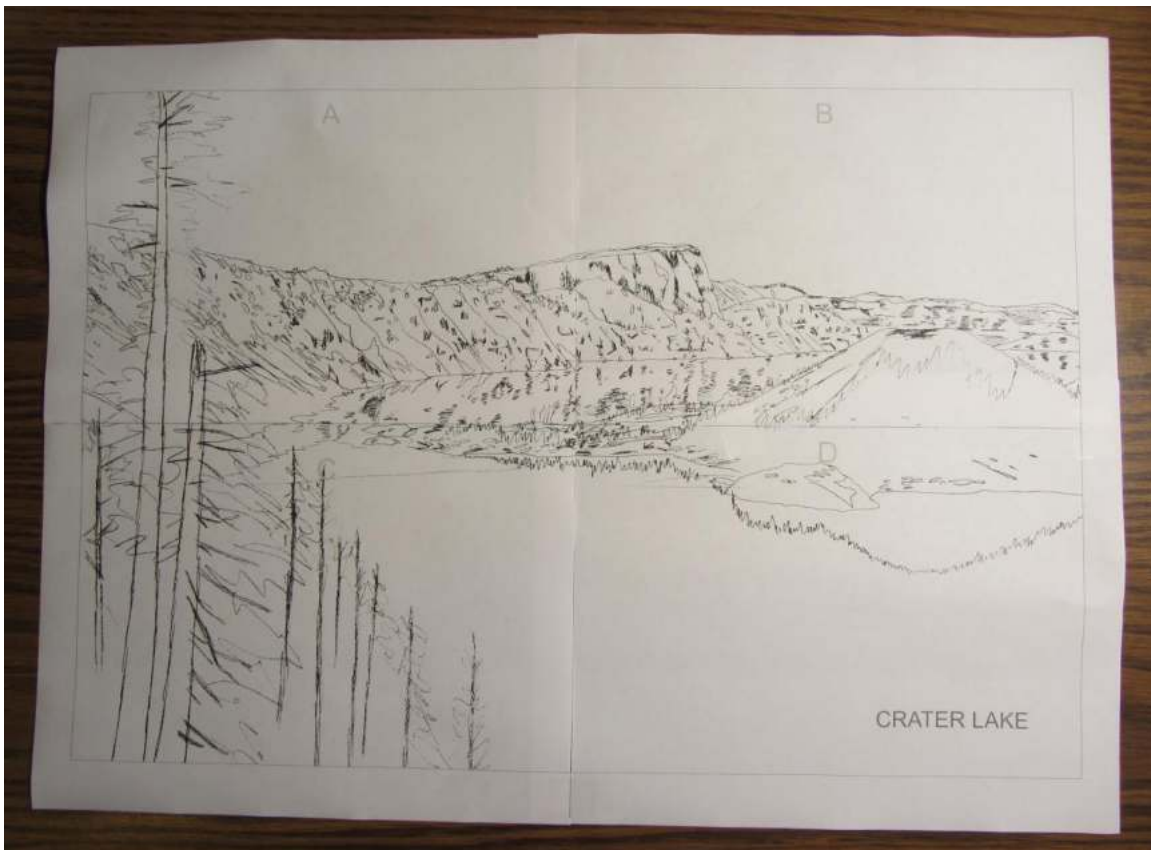
DRAWING OR TRACING

It is my intention to focus on and teach watercolor painting techniques. I would rather not get too hung up on drawing, as that is a large and worthy topic all on its own. So, I would like us to get to the “painting” as soon as possible. To assist in this end, I have supplied a downloadable traceable drawing guide (in 4 parts).

If you are a good drawer, then by all means use this as your guide to “free hand” draw out this composition on your watercolor paper.

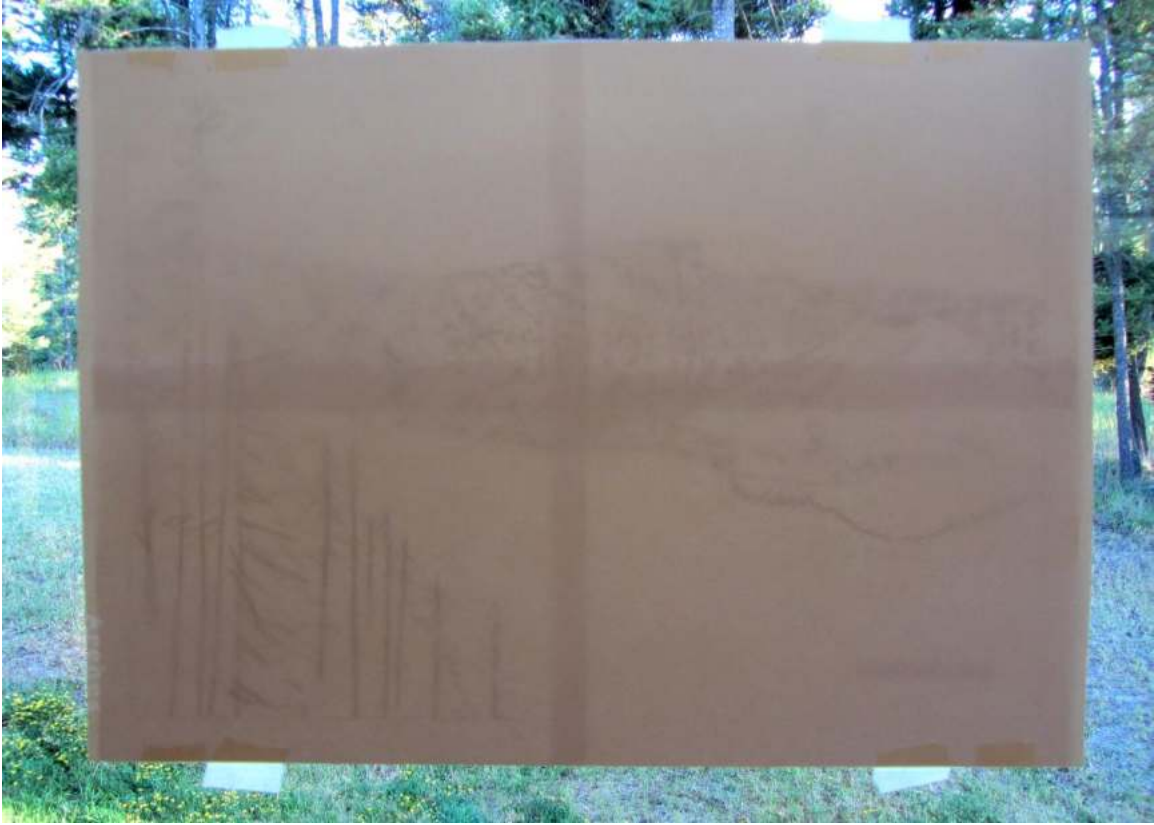
However, if you are a novice drawer, I would suggest tracing the drawing guide onto your watercolor paper. I will explain how:

- (1) Print out the 4 drawing guide parts and Scotch tape them together. This should create your 19” x 13” drawing guide (the perimeter of the painting itself).



- (2) Center this drawing guide onto the backside* of a 21” x 15” 140-lb. watercolor paper** (Cold-Press or Rough) and tape together with a few tabs of masking tape.

(3) With a few more tabs of masking tape, tape both to a window so that you can “see through” the 140-lb. watercolor paper — making the drawing guide visible to trace.



(4) Lightly trace with an H-lead pencil. DO NOT erase pencil mistakes as the eraser may blemish the surface of the fragile watercolor paper.

*If using the recommended Arches watercolor paper, you can most easily identify the paper’s front and back by reading the Arches corner insignia. Make certain that “Arches” reads correctly on the “front” side of the paper. On a half sheet, I prefer to locate the Arches insignia in a lower corner (as opposed to an upper corner).

**A full sheet of watercolor paper is 30” x 22”. Cut in half, this becomes (2) 22” x 15” pieces. Since I am working with a 19” x 13” painting size format, I prefer to trim the paper to 21” x 15” to provide a uniform 1” border on all four sides of the painting. I use this border to tape the painting down to a 24” x 16” painting board with 2” masking tape.